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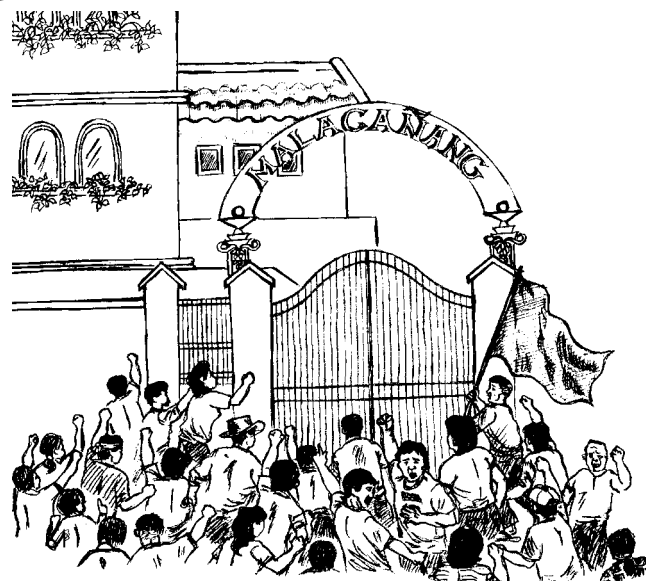
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Editorial

Consolidate and further expand the people's unity to overthrow the US-Estrada regime!

Estrada is trembling for fear of being ousted from his lair, his power being shaken by continued and successive nationwide protest actions as well as by the continuing decline of an economy already in the depths of crisis. Estrada has unleashed a coordinated campaign of deception, threats, bribery and intrigues in a desperate attempt to break the solid unity of a people marching in protest. All this, however, will fail to thwart the further consolidation and expansion of the people's unity. It is becoming ever clearer to more and more people that in order to remove Estrada, they would need to rely more primarily on the continued intensification and expansion of protests until Malacañang is surrounded by a million people determined to end Estrada's rule of profligacy, anomalies, decadence and violence.



Whatever method Estrada employs to prolong his stay in power, he will be defeated as the wave of street protests continues to gather strength. Every second more that Estrada insists on staying in power provides the people opportunity to further consolidate their struggle.



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THE POLITICAL CRISIS OF THE RULING SYSTEM CONTINUES TO worsen. Because of Estrada's stubbornness in clinging to power, the crisis becomes even more difficult to resolve swiftly and smoothly, as US imperialism would have it. As days go by, polarization and open conflicts among the opposing factions of the ruling class are exacerbated.

The anti-Estrada and pro-Estrada reactionaries openly clashed in the impeachment proceedings of Congress in mid-November. This was characterized, on the one hand, by the mass resignation of members from Malacañang's party including the heads of the Senate and Congress; and on the other, by the all-out use of funds and influence to maneuver the ascension of a new pro-Estrada leadership in the Congress and Senate.

More and more business organizations have openly joined the anti-Estrada movement, including those of big bourgeois compradors such as the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bankers Association of the Philippines, Makati Business Club and officials of the Philippine Stock Exchange aside from other business associations in the different provinces. Even the Federation of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce Inc. headed by Lucio Tan, one of the biggest cronies, has failed to commit itself to Estrada.

THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO DECLINE. THE GOVERNMENT budget deficit stood at P95.545 billion as of October, more than even the revised target of P90 billion for the year 2000. In order to stabilize the peso-dollar exchange rate, the BSP sold billions of dollars in the market, resulting in the reduction by \$500 million of its dollar reserves in just a month. Big business estimates that the economy will continue to decline next year. In a bid to artificially pump-prime the economy anew, the government plans to borrow another \$3.5 billion next year.

Rifts within the AFP and PNP continue to deepen as demoralization among policemen and military troops worsens. Estrada, PNP chief Gen. Panfilo Lacson and AFP chief Gen. Angelo Reyes are making sure they have absolute command of the police and military. They are speeding up the promotion of their favorite officials and removing from leading positions rival officials or those from whom they could not expect full support as was the case in the removal of 17 ranking PNP officials in Southern Luzon after they were involved in the Reform-PNP organization.

The anti-Estrada faction in the AFP has openly expressed its disenchantment. Disfranchised officials of the AFP and PNP have mustered enough courage to express their grievances against the favoritism of Estrada, Lacson and Reyes. The involvement in kidnapping, illegal

drugs and human rights violations of the erstwhile Presidential Anti-Crime Commission led by Estrada and Lacson has also been exposed.

Due to Estrada's desperation in the face of the intense political crisis, it has further sought refuge with the Marcos family, Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and Lucio Tan. Cojuangco and Tan have put up a P10-billion slush fund to bribe politicians (especially senators who will judge his impeachment case), fund rallies, pay media people and finance the pro-Estrada propaganda campaign. In return, Estrada has railroaded the approval of Executive Order 313 that would ensure that Cojuangco pockets the coco levy fund and his shares in San Miguel Corporation despite opposition from millions of small coconut farmers. By threatening to withdraw their support, the Marcoses are pushing Estrada to provide greater concessions especially in terms of speeding up their recovery of their ill-gotten wealth.

Victory in the struggle against the Estrada government can be measured in terms of the formation of a broad anti-Estrada united front, the launching of street actions by the people in their millions and by the actual ouster of Estrada. But more than this, relative to the question of the overall advance of the national-democratic revolution, victory in the anti-Estrada struggle can be measured in terms of the quantity and quality by which the people have raised the level of their strength to advance the revolutionary struggle.

ESTRADA AND HIS MOST TRUSTED MINIONS ARE UNDERTAKING A propaganda offensive that aims to defeat the broad anti-Estrada protest movement as well as the impeachment case against him in the Senate.

Through the help of his partymates in the Senate, Estrada will attempt to prolong the impeachment case, in the hope that street protests would lose steam and give him time to fix next year's elections, thus prolonging his rule. The call to "let the trial proceed, suspend the protests" has been echoed in order to stop the momentum of the protests and pave the way for his acquittal in the Senate. As a matter of fact, there are enough pro-Estrada senators to vote for Estrada's acquittal. However, this is not so easily done considering the raging anti-Estrada protests.

Malacañang strategists aim to break the broad anti-Estrada united front. They employ anti-communist scare tactics in order to cause the anti-Estrada reactionaries to hesitate in coordinating with militant organizations of the basic masses that are labeled as "communist". On the other hand, Estrada also brands the protests "elitist",

thinking that he would be able to prevent the militant forces from cooperating with the anti-Estrada reactionaries. The same objective is also served by the slogan calling for the resignation of all government officials. Issued by the counterrevolutionary clique of Filemon Lagman, it deflects the principal target of protests away from Estrada.

There has been no letup in the disinformation campaign of the PNP and AFP leadership. The latter has been spreading lies about so-called plans of the NPA to sabotage the demonstrations. They have also declared that they have been monitoring rallies and speeches and that they are ready to file "sedition" charges against anyone calling for the overthrow of the Estrada government. All these tactics aim to scare away the broad masses from participating in peaceful demonstrations. A scenario of widespread chaos is being concocted. The AFP and PNP also have saboteurs and agents provocateurs who can infiltrate



protests and foment trouble in order to justify the use of the fascist machinery to break up the demonstrations and arrest leaders of militant organizations. The Lagman clique can play a special role in this scheme: in the name of "insurrectionism", it can carry out bus-burnings, destruction of property, assassinations and others.

The "prayer rally" organized by the El Shaddai-Iglesia ni Cristo on November 11 which used public funds and relied on required attendances aimed to counter the November 4 rally and shroud the Estrada government's corruption and rottenness with a veil of sanctity. In order to show that he continues to enjoy popular support, Estrada uses his power and control over funds to ensure the loyalty of politicians, especially local bureaucrats.

WHATEVER METHOD ESTRADA EMPLOYS TO PROLONG HIS STAY in power, he will be defeated as the wave of street protests continues to gather strength. Every second more that Estrada insists on staying in power provides the people opportunity to further consolidate their struggle.

The overthrow of Estrada relies principally on ever

◀ growing and intensifying mass actions. Even the possibility that the Senate would decide to impeach Estrada's rests primarily on the strength of mass protests and the people's call for Estrada's ouster. The broad anti-Estrada united front should be strengthened and broadened in the face of attempts to destroy it.

National-democratic forces must focus their attention on launching ever growing mass actions. It is important to focus attention on launching militant mass actions such as workers' strikes, walkouts and demonstrations in schools, offices, communities and others. We must ensure that the various forces within the broad united front support these actions, or at the least, do not actively oppose them.

While the people are mobilized primarily along the call to overthrow or oust Estrada, there should be continued efforts to propagate and clarify the national-democratic struggle. There should be skillful combinations of sweeping and solid propaganda.

Victory in the struggle against the Estrada government can be measured in terms of the formation of a broad anti-Estrada united front, the launching of street actions by the people in their millions and by the actual ouster of Estrada. But more than this, relative to the question of the overall advance of the national-democratic revolution, victory in the anti-Estrada struggle can be measured in terms of the quantity and quality by which the people have raised the level of their strength to advance the revolutionary struggle: in terms of building new, or expanding existing mass organizations; in terms of the number of new mass activists and Party members; in terms of the expanding influence that the revolutionary forces exercise among broader sections of the people; and in terms of raising to ever greater heights the people's militancy and capability to fight for their national and democratic interests.

As stated in the EC-CC statement of October 14, the NPA should further intensify the armed struggle by launching regular and special tactical offensives. Armed offensives should be launched as an expression of the people's intense hatred of the Estrada regime. At the same time, it is extremely important to continuously advance the antifeudal struggles in the countryside which mobilizes millions of peasant masses.

Even now the revolutionary movement is advancing with great strides. It will certainly gain further strength as the political crisis of the ruling system worsens. **AB**

Massive and daring protest actions launched

Protest actions all over the country continue to rapidly expand and intensify since the outbreak of the Estrada regime's grave political crisis sparked by the disclosures of anomalies by Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson in October.

Within a span of a few weeks, the anti-Estrada united front has swiftly expanded and swept across the entire country. Everywhere, organizations of various classes and sectors launched their respective activities in unity with the call for Estrada's resignation. At its backbone are militant and national-democratic organizations that pioneered, and are at the forefront of, the clamor to oust Estrada and are emboldening various sectors to make a stand and to wage resistance.

Among the sectoral organizations are the government employees' RAGE (Rise All Government Employees!), the youth's GEN-X movement, the health sector's Code-RED (Resign Estrada *Dali!*), and the lawyers' OUSTER (Organization of United Solicitors for Truth and Estrada's Resignation).

In a rally, the youth gave Estrada a failing mark because of his regime's neglect of education. Lawyers, on the other hand, issued Estrada a symbolic warrant of arrest, a notice of eviction from Malacañang and a hold departure order. Estrada's immorality and abuse of women's rights were lambasted in a women's march. In a demonstration, the urban poor condemned Estrada's fake housing programs and sham distribution of houses and lots.

Massive street actions are widespread across the nation, contrary to Estrada's insistence that the protests are concentrated in Manila. In fact, even in places where the organized ranks of national-democratic forces are yet to gain strength, people trooped to the streets calling for an end to the Estrada government, proving widespread anger and disgust for the regime.

Anti-Estrada demonstrations are becoming ever larger, broader and bolder. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in big rallies on November 4, 14 and 24-30. Industrial, transport and government offices' strikes, student boycotts, marches, rallies and demonstrations broke out. In the streets roared the call for millions of people to encircle Malacañang to force Estrada to resign. ▶

NOVEMBER 24-30. About a hundred thousand people all over the country joined a weeklong mass action dubbed “Isang Linggo ng Protesta, Pabilisin ang Pagpapataksik kay Estrada” that culminated in a two-day protest action in Mendiola on November 29-30. The mass action was highlighted by a “Lakbayan” (march-caravan) launched by 10,000 members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and Pambansang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) from Northern and Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Bicol. The breadth of forces allied with the anti-Estrada movement was evident when the protesters from the toiling masses arriving in Manila were ardently welcomed by anti-Estrada businessmen. Up to 85,000 demonstrators massed up in Mendiola on November 29 where they expressed their intense determination to remove Estrada from power through speeches, cultural presentations, the burning of an effigy of “Erapzilla” and a 10-minute noise barrage where they cried “Erap resign” and “Sobra nang pahirap, patalsikin si Erap” (*There’s too much hardship, oust Erap*). The protest action was supported by student walk-outs at the University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila, Miriam College and others. Drivers also launched strikes, paralyzing up to 70% of transportation along certain routes in Metro Manila.

In a statement, KMP and BAYAN chair Rafael Mariano declared that the successful protest action will be followed by even bigger mass actions in December that may culminate in calls for civil disobedience (or a refusal to obey unjust laws). Some possibilities include non-payment of taxes and refusal by migrant workers to send remittances through banks. They also called for a boycott of businesses owned by Estrada cronies.

Meanwhile, protest actions were also launched in various cities and town centers in the Philippines. In Bacolod, up to 85% of transportation was paralyzed. Some 3,000 members of BAYAN-Negros also braved a storm to wage a rally and a noise barrage. In Baguio City, some 200 protesters conducted a torch march. A symbolic eviction notice was also posted at the entrance to the Voice of America compound where large log cabins owned by Estrada and his cronies are located. There were other protest gatherings in Laguna and in the cities of Naga, Legazpi, Tacloban, Cagayan de Oro and Davao as well as other cities in Davao del Sur and Davao Oriental.

NOVEMBER 14. Based on incomplete reports, at least 200,000 people participated in the “Pambansang Welga ng Mamamayan” launched in Metro Manila and in other parts

of the Philippines. Workers and drivers launched a one-day strike, students boycotted their classes and hundreds of people poured into the streets in what was referred to as the beginning of the “Last Quarter Storm”.

Thousands of farmers and fisherfolk from the countryside who agreed to hold a farmstrike in their respective provinces also joined the *Welga*.

In Manila, around 80,000 rallied at Liwasang Bonifacio and marched towards Mendiola. Around evening, thousands held a vigil to attend a protest concert dubbed “Pamorningan sa Mendiola”. Twenty thousand people rallied in Makati. Aside from workers who participated in the rally at the Ayala Avenue, stockbrokers also staged an unprecedented and historic walkout.

In the Visayas, at least 56,000 poured into the streets on November 14: Bacolod (32,000); Iloilo (10,000); Cebu (7,000); Roxas (4,000); Dumaguete (1,500); Tacloban (800); and Tagbilaran City (700).

In other cities and town centers in Luzon, around 27,000 launched rallies and other forms of collective action: Ilagan and other towns in Isabela (11,000); Bulacan (6,000); Vigan, Ilocos Sur (3,500); Baguio City (3,000); Nueva Vizcaya (2,000); Tarlac (1,000) and Nueva Ecija (300).

In Mindanao, 14,000 participated in various protest actions, according to incomplete reports: Butuan City (6,000); Cagayan de Oro City (3,000); Ozamis City (1,000); Dipolog City (1,000); General Santos City (1,000); Cotabato City (700). In Davao City, 60% of all establishments closed shop in unity with the people’s national strike.

NOVEMBER 4. About 120,000 across the country responded to the call of Jaime Cardinal Sin and Corazon Aquino to attend a prayer rally at the EDSA Shrine in Mandaluyong City and to launch other forms of action in their respective provinces.

A hundred thousand people gathered at the corner of EDSA and Ortigas Avenue and cried “Erap resign!” as Cardinal Sin and Aquino renewed their call for Estrada to immediately resign. Among those who participated were delegations from the provinces of Northern and Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. The clamor for Estrada’s resignation also resounded in streets, plazas and churches in other cities and towns: Bacolod (8,000); Cagayan de Oro (3,000); Pagadian (2,500); Tuguegarao (1,000); Cotabato (1,000); Bauio (300); and Cebu (100) and in the towns of Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya (1,000); and Victoria, Laguna (200). Actions were also launched in the cities of Iloilo, Dumaguete and Tacloban in the Visayas; and in the cities of Davao and General Santos in Mindanao. **AB**

Statement

Estrada and his minions: targets of NPA special operations

*by Gregorio “Ka Roger” Rosal
CPP National Spokesperson
November 18, 2000*

Joseph Ejercito Estrada and his partners in plunder, thievery and other criminal operations are legitimate targets of the New People’s Army’s (NPA) special operations. These operations are expressions of the Filipino people’s deep loathing for the despicable regime and contribute to the people’s struggle to overthrow the Estrada government that is rotten to the core.



Likewise, in accordance with the statement of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee in October, the following actions against the specified targets may be launched by the NPA within or outside guerrilla zones:

1) Punitive actions against businesses owned by Lucio Tan including Fortune Tobacco, Asia Brewery and others. Its distribution operations and warehouses in guerrilla zones may be targeted.

2) Punitive actions against the businesses of Eduardo “Danding” Cojuangco including San Miguel Corporation and its subsidiaries. Special operations targeting Cojuangco’s private armies in Negros, Tarlac and other areas may also be conducted. Cojuangco’s private armies are notorious for violating human rights and brutalizing the peasant masses.

3) Meting punishment on Gen. Panfilo Lacson and his rabidly fascist criminal lackeys in the police and military.

4) Punishment of Estrada’s jueteng buddies including Charlie “Atong” Ang, Bong Pineda, Charing Magbuhos and Anton Prieto who are usually despotic landlords in their home provinces.

5) Special operations may also be launched against the Presidential Security Group and other notorious AFP units, especially those with blood debts against the people and who protect Estrada and his cronies’ rackets.

This is also a reminder that the Party Central

Committee’s order to form a special NPA unit for the arrest of the late Marcos’ relatives-especially Imelda and Ferdinand, Jr., as well as the fascist dictator’s foremost minions-remains effective. This order attains new significance and urgency after Estrada coddled the Marcoses and shielded them from the people crying out for justice against the abuses wrought by martial law.

NPA units may identify other targets based on the information that they gather regarding the interests and other operations of Estrada and his minions in zones where revolutionary armed forces operate. The Party enjoins the people and other forces to submit to the NPA any relevant information that would contribute to the success of NPA operations.

Launching these special operations is in accordance with the principle of protracted people’s war. These are carried out alongside the continuous and all-sided intensification of armed struggle, strengthening of antifeudal struggles and expanding and deepening the revolutionary mass base in the countryside.

The Party believes that the emphasis of the struggle to overthrow Estrada lies in unarmed, peaceful but militant street protests waged by the people in their millions. Nonetheless, the NPA must conduct special operations against the Estrada government to further weaken the reactionary regime and inspire and embolden the people to further unite and wage resistance. **AB**

Crime and corruption at the very helm of the neocolonial state

The rottenness that is intrinsic in the reactionary state is at present very evident. None other than its very president is facing a corruption case that is considered one of the most scandalous in the history of reactionary politics in the country.

Estrada's implication in the current jueteng scandal and other countless anomalies that involved his administration almost every day of his two-and-a-half-year presidency, is now shaking the entire ruling system in a manner comparable only to that of the last years of the Marcos dictatorship.

"Lord of all jueteng lords." Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who until lately was Estrada's friend and conspirator in illegal activities, disclosed that the president received more than P400 million from jueteng operations in the whole of Luzon. The people also witnessed how other ranking government officials and close friends of Estrada's benefited from this, and how they tried to protect and cover up for a reactionary president who is rotten to the core.

Among the government officials who were revealed to have benefited from illegal gambling along with the president were Sen. John Osmeña and Sen. Teresa Aquino Oreta, Presidential Liaison Officer Jaime Policarpio, presidential adviser Anton Prieto and presidential son Mayor "Jinggoy" Estrada. Also directly involved are Estrada's pals Charlie "Atong" Ang and Yolanda Ricaforte and the president's attorney Edward Serapio.

Stealing from the nation's coffers. Aside from jueteng collections, Singson also disclosed that the reactionary president amassed P130 million from P200 million worth of tobacco excise taxes intended for small tobacco

farmers in Ilocos Sur.

This is not the first time that Estrada has been implicated in stealing from the government's coffers. Early this year, a former director of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office revealed that the president, Luisa Ejercito (one of his wives) and "Jinggoy" Estrada pocketed P430 million from the government charity fund.

This is apart from other scandals implicating various administration officials. In June 1999, it was revealed that the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)

and the Philippine National Police (PNP) was involved in the anomalous purchase of handcuffs worth P16 million. In

September of the same year, 15 members of Estrada's cabinet were proven to be utilizing luxury vehicles confiscated by the Bureau of Customs from smugglers. In February, DILG Sec. Ronaldo Puno was charged with graft in relation to the cancellation of a P200-million contract with Motorola for the purchase of communication radios. In March, Puno was again charged with graft along with PNP chief Roberto Lastimoso for an anomalous P3.6 million-contract for mandatory drug tests of policemen.

Just this September, DECS Sec. Andrew Gonzales was accused of using a P12-million donation to purchase luxury cars for himself and other officials from the agency.

Extreme profligacy. It is despicable how Estrada, his wives and children could have such lavish and opulent lifestyles in spite of the intense poverty suffered by the toiling masses.

Estrada is an inveterate gambler. He has been reported to bet as much as P15 million during mahjong sorties with his buddies. He thinks nothing of giving P1 million each in *balato* to his loyal followers. According to Singson, by the time he severed ties with the president,



Estrada's implication in the current jueteng scandal and other countless anomalies that involved his administration almost every day of his two-and-a-half-year presidency, is now shaking the entire ruling system in a manner comparable only to that of the last years of the Marcos dictatorship.

Estrada must already have amassed up to P300 million from his mahjong winnings.

Recent reports have revealed the existence of luxurious mansions worth almost a billion pesos constructed in 1999 for Estrada's wives and children. Their cost could not be accounted for by Estrada's declared income of P2.3 million for that year. Even his declared assets of P35.8 million could not compare to the total value of these mansions and lots.

There are also 66 corporations where Estrada, his wives and children are reportedly registered as either stockholders or board members. The value of Estrada's declared assets for the past 12 years could not account for the P121.5 million total value of his and his families' stockholdings in these corporations.

A kingdom of thugs. Most of Estrada's decisions on how to run the government are made not with his official cabinet but with his so-called "midnight cabinet" composed of friends and drinking and gambling buddies who reap huge favors because of their strong ties with Malacañang.

A most glaring example of just how much Estrada's cronies have profited is Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's reinstatement and election as chairman of the board of San Miguel Corporation. Just recently, Estrada signed Executive Order 313, which is expected to pave the way for Cojuangco to completely regain possession of the coco levy funds he had stolen.

Last July, Perfecto Yasay, former chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, disclosed that Estrada had pressured him to absolve his friend Dante Tan (who was a major contributor to his campaign) of charges that he manipulated stock prices of BW Resources, a firm that runs gambling casinos. Yasay added that Estrada received kickbacks of more than P1.8 billion from the sale of PLDT and BW Resources to favored companies.

Also upon the intervention of

Malacañang, Lucio Tan, another Estrada friend, was acquitted in August of charges of evading tax payments of up to P25 billion.

Other Estrada cronies who amass benefits and are able to influence the affairs of government are businessmen Mark Jimenez, Ramon Lee, Lucio Co, Jaime Dichavez, William Gatchalian, Eusebio Tan and Jacinto Ng; and gangsters like Charlie "Atong" Ang, Congressman Luis "Baby" Asistio, Robert Aventajado and until lately, Singson.

The abuse of power by Estrada relatives also knows no bounds. In January 1999, for instance, Celia de Castro, a cousin of Estrada, requested the Department of Budget and Management to release P200 million for a questionable book purchasing deal with DECS. In order to "facilitate" the fund release, de Castro gave Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno a P3 million-bribe.

FOR THE REACTIONARY SYSTEM TO HAVE reached such a serious level of disintegration is inevitable. Estrada became president at a time of unprecedented economic crisis, when rival political factions were faced with such severely depleted resources and means from which they could profit. Loans coming in from other countries had all but dried up, business and production had further slowed down. Thus, even patently illegal and criminal activities are now being run directly by the highest echelons of the bureaucracy, police and military.

Given this scenario, Estrada's rivals for political power are stridently turning against him, exposing every piece of evidence they could muster regarding Estrada's debauched use of power.

More importantly, the people are tirelessly exposing and opposing these anomalies and are taking advantage of the political crisis that has emerged and intensified to further expand and strengthen the revolutionary movement. **AB**

On the tactical alliance with anti-Estrada reactionaries and the pseudo-Left rhetoric of Lagman

UPHOLDING THE ANTI-ESTRADA tactical alliance between the patriotic and democratic forces and reactionaries who are not in power is in accordance with the revolutionary united front principle of taking advantage of rifts within the ranks of reactionaries to isolate and fight the reactionaries in power.

This is being proven correct by the broad range of forces belonging to the anti-Estrada front and its capacity to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people across the nation; and by negative example, the isolation of the Contras, especially Sanlakas and BMP, who in their attempt to lead the people astray are calling for the resignation not only of Estrada, but also of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, vice president of the reactionary government and one of the forces opposing Estrada.

In dealing with anti-Estrada reactionaries, there is need for both unity and struggle. While recognizing that the Arroyo-Aquino-Ramos camp is an ally in the anti-Estrada struggle, there is no denying that they are basically reactionaries like Estrada. The fundamental interests of the people are not compromised; rather, they are firmly upheld and advanced.

The revolutionary forces are aware that the anti-Estrada struggle is not equivalent to, but is part of, the entire effort to overthrow the ruling system. It is much simpler and faster to topple a puppet in power than to overthrow the entire reactionary ruling system. The revolutionary movement is prepared to resist the Estrada regime and all the puppets who would succeed him,

even as it continues to accumulate organized and armed strength until this is sufficient to bring down the entire system. While arousing and mobilizing the people to oust the Estrada government, it tirelessly explains the national-democratic program to them and organizes and mobilizes them along the path of revolution.

In an attempt to undermine anti-Estrada unity and desperately cast aspersion on the correct revolutionary policy of the united front, Filemon “Popoy” Lagman and Sanlakas-BMP, pseudo-Leftist organizations notorious for defrauding the workers’ movement in Manila, insist that the tactical alliance policy with anti-Estrada reactionaries is tantamount to reformism and collaborationism. They want to make it appear that acknowledging Macapagal-Arroyo’s important role in the anti-Estrada struggle is equivalent to endorsing her and compromising the “independent class-line”.

Nonetheless, despite their rhetoric that purports to be more leftist than the Left and their muddled-up slogans, Lagman could not conceal their sheer reformism. This is because in the final analysis, what they claim as the “people’s authentic clamor for genuine change” has nothing to do with waging a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the ruling system. After screaming themselves hoarse in calling for the resignation of leading government officials and the “overthrow of the government”, it turns out that all they want is snap elections, which

Lagman believes to be “the more significant struggle” and means to achieve “genuine change”.

It is good that Lagman’s scheme has been exposed and criticized early on. Because of this, not only has Lagman failed to sow division within the anti-Estrada united front; his forces have been swept to the sidelines and isolated from the mainstream of protest. To be able to impose themselves and take center stage, Sanlakas-BMP dumped the call for Macapagal-Arroyo’s resignation and replaced it with a more deceiving slogan (“Topple Erap but to topple him is not enough”). The tone was slightly modified to target the “trapos” or traditional politicians who are allegedly at the root of the rotten political system (as if Lagman is not himself a “trapo” who has connived with bureaucrats in pocketing millions of pesos in exchange for selling out the struggle of workers and the urban poor). It is a huge reformist illusion to say that “genuine change in the political system” can be achieved outside the framework of the revolutionary overthrow of the reactionary ruling system.

Lagman and Sanlakas-BMP are rendering the Estrada government a special service in attempting to divide the anti-Estrada united front. They wave the banner of the anti-Estrada struggle, but only to obscure or conceal it with the various other banners they wave in the name of “heightening and deepening” the struggle. This broadens the target of the people’s loathing so as to blunt the aim of protest.

Lagman and Sanlakas-BMP must not be allowed to freely spew venom against the anti-Estrada united front and against the revolutionary movement and its correct principles. The rottenness of the Lagman clique must be continuously exposed along with its counterrevolutionary principles and deeds. **AB**

Advance the rights and welfare of government employees!

Government employees roundly condemned Estrada and his minions' dirty tricks to intimidate and coerce them into supporting his despicable regime. They militantly stand, together with other oppressed sectors of society, for the ouster of Estrada and for their rights and welfare.

The employees suffer more hardships due to the anti-worker and pro-imperialist policies that the US-Estrada regime has implemented and put into law. Flexible and cheap labor policies have exacerbated the miserable conditions of workers—including that of government employees. In the public sector, these policies are being implemented through the privatization program and the unending reorganization of the bureaucracy which have resulted in widespread layoffs of regular employees.

The Philippine reactionary government has more than 1.3 million employees. Their services as teachers, soldiers, police personnel and workers of strategic institutions are crucial to the reactionary in power. Thus, their active resistance will surely hasten the fall of the Estrada government.

It is imperative for the next reactionary regime to immediately address the employees' demands if it doesn't want to go the way of Estrada. The following are a few of their demands:

INCREASE EMPLOYEES' SALARY BY P3000! What government employees receive is actually less than the minimum wage. Its real value is further depressed due to the continuing increase in the prices of prime commodities and basic services. Despite this, the Estrada regime has refused to address the employees' demands for a P3000-increase of their measly and oft-delayed salaries. Instead, the regime insulted the struggling workers when it increased their salaries by up to 10% only.

The government needs to allot funds in the national budget for the P3000 across-the-board increase in employees' salaries or if not, create a special allocation for this purpose. An allocation of P46.8 billion would be enough to address the demands of all employees. This amount is not even half of the allocation for debt servicing.

GRANT THE EMPLOYEES THEIR JUST BENEFITS! Through Administrative Order (AO) No. 86, Estrada stopped the granting of incentives intended for crisis-alleviation like the amelioration pay and similar benefits. He kept other benefits to a mere pittance, such as the personal and economic relief allowance (P1,000/month), 13th month pay and Christmas bonus. The Estrada regime likewise continued to implement the cunningly conceived GSIS Act of 1997 which required additional obligatory contributions to the institution even without any significant change in benefits. Actually, it even denies employees their full retirement benefits. And worse, Estrada allows businesses of favored friends and cronies to obtain loans from GSIS funds.

Thus, AO 87 must be repealed and the amelioration pay and other benefits regularized as an item in the national budget. Also, GSIS policies must be reviewed and the practice of lending its funds to private companies stopped.

REPEAL ALL ANTI-WORKER POLICIES AND UPHOLD EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS! When Estrada assumed power, he signed into law numerous Executive Orders (EO). Particular to government employees are EO 102, 165, 162, 191, 223, 271 and 281—all of which are about dismantling, reorganizing and privatizing entire bureaucracies and trampled on their right to security of tenure. There is also Proclamation No. 50 of the Aquino regime that pertains to the hiring and firing of personnel under the privatization program. Thousands of employees have already been laid off in Estrada's more than two years in office.

Policies that have given rise to the unhampered reorganization and dismantling of institutions should be repealed; employees' security of tenure should be upheld at all times. Likewise, the more than 120,000 casual and contractual employees should be regularized.

The reactionary government is also using the absence of a law upholding the basic right to unionize and to strike to keep the employees' conditions miserable and suppress any struggle that may emerge from their ranks. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and managements of public institutions have been thwarting the employees' ►

No change in US imperialism

THE RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS held November 7 between Al Gore (Democratic Party) and George W Bush (Republican Party) was one of the closest in US history. The various legal maneuvers and plots concocted by feuding parties to put their candidates into power and the people's criticisms of, and grievances against, the US electoral process are creating widespread confusion and disorder on the course that politics has been taking in that country.

The contest between the Republican and Democratic parties is so intense since they are deciding on who the next representative and administrator of the US bourgeois monopoly state will be. In reality, however, the two parties are identical. Although there are slight differences in

methods and policies, both parties agree on the main policies of the big bourgeoisie against the American proletariat and people and towards further imperialist exploitation of the world's peoples.

As far as trade policies are concerned, both parties call for further "globalization". They wholly support the North America Free Trade Agreement and other economic blocs that the US dominates. Both call for the opening up of the Chinese market so that they can freely dump their surplus products there. They are also united in allocating subsidies for their own agricultural products even if this is in violation of GATT, so as to depress their prices and kill China's local agricultural sector and that of the other nations where they dump their products.

Although Bush's tone is more aggressive regarding his would-be administration's foreign policy, both parties have the same attitude towards North Korea, Iraq, Russia, Palestine and other states that US imperialism treats with "concern".

They are one in further strengthening their military so as to effectively "police" the globe, suppress peoples and states who go against imperialist dictates and once again award billion-dollar contracts to businesses that are part of the military-industrial complex. Their policies of warmongering, troublemaking and outright intervention in countries where their imperialist interests are at stake do not differ.

As representative of the US monopoly bourgeoisie, both parties ►

◄ self-organization. Moreover, CSC Memorandum Circular No. 06 and Executive Order No. 180, Series of 1987 and other laws outrightly violate the employee's right to unionize and to strike.

STOP THE PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS! The widespread layoffs of workers under the privatization program of the reactionary government is of no concern to the Estrada regime. The layoffs have already victimized employees from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Petron, Philippine Airlines, Manila Hotel, National Steel Corp. and Light Railway Transit. At the National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR), more than 2,341 employees have been laid off as of the latter part of 1999 under its wily Special Disengagement Program. It is estimated that 900 more workers will be fired after NAPOCOR's privatization. At the Philippine Postal System, 17,000 workers are in danger of losing their jobs

once it is privatized. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the National Food Authority's 6,000 employees nationwide will lose their jobs once the agency is sold to the private sector.

Privatization is terribly devastating not only to the workers' welfare but also to the nation's entire economy. This program should be stopped and pro-imperialist policies of "globalization" abrogated. The government should also immediately buy back public corporations it had previously auctioned off such as those engaged in providing education, health, water services and others.

It is clear to the struggling government employees that their calls are but a part of the overall demands of the people. Towards this, workers in the public sector are one with all oppressed sectors of society in calling for nationwide change within the framework of genuine democracy. **AB**

The employees suffer more hardships due to the anti-worker and pro-imperialist policies that the US-Estrada regime has implemented and put into law. Flexible and cheap labor policies have exacerbated the miserable conditions of workers—including that of government employees.

Intensifying anti-imperialist struggle in Korea

In 1945, after the Second World War, the Korean Peninsula was divided by US imperialism along the 38th parallel into the north (Soviet occupation zone) and south (US occupation zone) to facilitate the surrender of colonialist Japan's troops. The US failed to influence North Korea which immediately prepared for the establishment of a democratic people's government. The anti-imperialist North and the pro-capitalist South Korea eventually declared two separate and unique states in 1948.

Determined to dominate the entire Korean Peninsula and make it the center of anti-communist strategy, the US armed the ROK Army of South Korea with modern military equipment, intensified its training and instigated more than 2,000 provocations against North Korea in 1949. On June 25, 1950, the US launched a surprise attack against the DPRK, sparking a war between North and South Korea that led to an armistice in 1953.

The whole world awaits the triumph of the process of the historic reunification of Korea after almost 52 years of forced division by US imperialism. In June came the momentous summit between Kim Jong Il, head of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) or North Korea and Kim Dae Jung, president of the Republic of Korea (ROK) or South Korea. The summit saw the signing of a joint declaration that stipulated the two countries' intentions to end the war between them and to remove the division separating the people of the once united Korea.

The Korean people's determination for reunification is indeed praiseworthy. It is a great challenge to unify the broadest number of the people of Korea to face and overcome all the obstacles in shaping a country that is truly free from imperialist intervention.

THE ALL-OUT INTERVENTION OF U.S. imperialism through its puppet govern-

ment in South Korea is a great impediment to the gruelling reunification process. The US persistently attempts to play a major role in the reunification talks to ensure that the rebuilding of one Korea will serve imperialism.

The US is aggressively taking diplomatic steps through US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. US demands include its bid for North Korea to arrest its independent missile development program allegedly in the name of "peace" and "concern for the safety of humanity". Because of North Korea's militant anti-imperialist stand, the US views it as a serious threat to preserving US hegemony in northeastern Asia. Thus, the US has occupied South Korea since 1945 where it maintains 40,000 troops (out of 100,000 in the whole of Asia) to date.

While North Korea firmly upholds its right to missile development, US imperialism utilizes the issue to push North Korea against the wall,

hoping that it would abandon its anti-imperialist and socialist principles.

DESPITE IMPERIALIST MANEUVERS, the people of Korea have so far successfully advanced the initial steps for rebuilding the Peninsula. These are steps towards the unification of a nation broken up by imperialism and towards shattering the imperialist US' economic blockade against North Korea.

One concrete result of the two Koreas' leaders' summit was the reunion in June and November of two batches comprised of 100 families each, who were among the thousands separated by the US-instigated Korean War in 1950-53.

Likewise, the current efforts to reconnect the Kwongui Railway Line through an agreement between North and South Korea, is another step that will certainly accelerate and develop economic and cultural exchanges not only between the two Koreas but also with other countries in Asia and ►

◄ give their all-out support to giant monopoly corporations by granting tax cuts while intensifying their exploitation of the American proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world.

In general, both parties offer no real deviation from the current policies of the Clinton administration. Both recognize

the "unprecedented" boom of the US economy and both have pledged to continue the policies that have brought this about. This, despite the reality that the crisis these policies have brought forth continues to deepen and that billions of people not only in the US but also in its neocolonies are suffering from intense poverty. AB



NEWS of the people's struggle

4 CAFGU MEMBERS WOUNDED IN SURIGAO AMBUSH

Four elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) were wounded in an ambush by New People's Army (NPA) fighters between Km. 61 and 62 in Tago, Surigao del Sur on November 25. The CAFGU were part of a convoy of armed escorts of the Surigao Development Corporation, a logging company. The NPA safely retreated after a 10-minute firefight.

NOTORIOUS INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVE PUNISHED IN ISABELA

Red fighters under the Benito Tesorio Front (BTF) of Isabela punished notorious intelligence operative Jose "Bianong" Portuges in Barangay Narra, Echague, Isabela on November 6. According to correspondence reports from the BTF, the punitive action was in accordance with the decision of the people's court on a number of Portuges' proven crimes against the revolutionary movement and the people. Portuges tipped off the military on the presence of an NPA unit in 1975 in Barangay Villa Rey, Echague, resulting in the death of two comrades, William Begg Jr. (Ka Benjie) and Ka Emy. In 1985, he again instigated the encirclement of an armed propaganda unit in Villa Rey, Echague that resulted in a firefight. The NPA was able to retreat but the military vented its ire on three farmers. One was killed and the other two wounded. On June 30 this year, another unit was tipped off by Portuges. He also engaged in carabao rustling in various barangays in Echague and served as guide in AFP operations.

The townspeople hailed the successful punitive action against Portuges.

PUNITIVE ACTIONS LAUNCHED

Four punitive actions were launched by the NPA in Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Leyte and Sorsogon this November.

In Nueva Ecija, the NPA torched two Autobus passenger buses and one Victory Liner bus along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Puncan, Carranglan on November 29. The two Autobuses owned by the late dictator Marcos' daughter and

son-in-law Irene and Gregorio Araneta III, were bound for Manila, and passed a Victory Liner bus bound for Isabela. All three buses were blocked and burned by Red fighters as punishment for the bus companies' refusal to pay appropriate revolutionary taxes.

Prior to this, the NPA punished the chief of police of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija on November 27. P/Sr. Insp. Romeo Pillonar was among those responsible for the death of eight comrades in Barangay Palestina, San Jose City in 1995. Four of Pillonar's cohorts had already been punished by the NPA.

In Batangas, NPA guerrillas punished JAC Liner by torching one of its airconditioned buses on November 23 in Sto. Tomas town. The punitive action was carried out because of the JAC Liner's continued refusal to comply with the revolutionary movement's taxation policy. The NPA had also torched one of its buses in February 1999.

In Leyte, Red fighters under the Mt. Amadewin Command (North Leyte Front) blocked and burned a Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) vehicle in Sityo Km. 14, Barangay Masarayao, Kananga on November 21. In a statement, the NPA explained that the PNOC was being punished for suppressing the rights of its workers. The NPA also warned two PNOC officials responsible for the violent dispersal of a strike by workers of the Leyte A Geothermal Project in October. The Leyte A Geothermal Project is being managed by the PNOC.

In Sorsogon, CAFGU element Maximo Fonteverde, who actively gather information for the military against the revolutionary movement, was punished by the NPA on November 27 in Barangay Mapaso, Irosin.

COJUANGCO'S LANDGRABBING IN ISABELA CONDEMNED

The Benito Tesorio Front (BTF) of Isabela condemned San Miguel Corporation (SMC) for landgrabbing 100,000 hectares covering five towns in the northwestern part of the province. SMC is owned by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., Estrada's biggest crony. According to the BTF, many farmers in the towns of Mallig, Quezon, Delfin Albano, Sto. Tomas and Sta. Maria are being robbed of their land by the SMC in conspiracy with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), to pave

◀ Europe.

MEANWHILE, THE CLAMOR OF THE SOUTH Korean people intensifies against the continued stay of tens of thousands of US military forces in their country. In May of this year, successive demonstrations by the people of South Korea demanded the scrapping of the military agreement between the gov-

ernment and the US, an apology from the US for its soldiers' crimes against the people and the banishment of American troops. Likewise, workers, farmers, women, youth and other oppressed sectors in South Korea are intensifying their struggle to end the dominance of the US and local reactionary puppets.

The initial implementation of reunification talks between the two Korean leaders is a victory in the people's all-out struggle against imperialist domination. The anti-imperialist movement both in North and South Korea serves as the powerful binding force uniting the people of the Korean Peninsula. **AB**



NEWS of the people's struggle

the way for an SMC cassava plantation. A flour plant will also be set up in the town of Quezon.

Likewise, the BTF criticized the reorganization of the CAFGU in Jones, Isabela. According to the BTF, majority of the barangay captains of Jones objected in September to the scheme hatched by the 5th ID and town mayor Jesus Sebastian. The latter then succeeded in reversing the decision when they harassed the barangay captains and ordered a second round of voting. Said the BTF: "It is clear to the people that the AFP will only use the CAFGU in its 'counter-insurgency' program, which is but a terrorism campaign against the people. It is focused on suppressing the people's democratic rights, destroying their livelihood, houses and property, and murdering them."

MORE NEWS FROM THE FIELD

FROM THE ILOCOS-CORDILLERA REGION

The October 2000 issue of *Ang Bayan* reported that a soldier died and four were wounded in an ambush by the New People's Army on forces of the 17th IB in Baay-Licuan, Abra on October 21. According to the latest correspondence reports from the Agustin Bagnales Command (NPA-Abra), four soldiers died and five were wounded in the ambush. The enemy forces were part of a convoy of soldiers aboard a tank, two six-wheeler trucks and a Kennedy-type jeep who were on their way to launch an operation in Northern Abra. There were no casualties on the side of the squad from the Agustin Bagnales command that conducted the ambush.

Prior to this, 17th IB troopers conducting an operation in Candon town, Ilocos Sur had also been ambushed by the Alfredo Cesar Command (NPA-Ilocos Sur) on July 28. Six soldiers died and two were wounded in the ambush, while a Red fighter was martyred.

In the same issue, *AB* also reported that a soldier died and another was wounded in an NPA ambush on troopers of the 19th Special Forces Coy of the Philippine Army on October 2 in Bontoc, Mountain Province. According to follow-up correspondence reports from the Leonardo Pacsi Command (NPA-Mountain Province), a sniping operation was conducted against the Special Forces platoon that was launching an operation in Mount Amongaw, Barrio Mainit. The wounded soldier later died in hospital. Confiscated from the sniping operation was an M14, ammunition and two packs.

The Special Forces troops were so demoralized and terrified that they retrieved their casualties in the evening even if the sniping operation occurred at 7:30 a.m. and the Red fighters had long left the scene. Even in the absence of the NPA, the troopers kept on firing their guns for an hour and a half before retreating to Barrio Mainit where they used the civilians as

shields. They also waited six days before conducting pursuit operations against the NPA.

FROM NORTHERN MINDANAO

The October 2000 issue of *AB*, reported a raid launched by the NPA on October 17 against a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Policarpio, San Luis, Agusan del Sur where a soldier and three CAFGU elements were killed. According to the latest correspondence reports from *Ang Kalihukan* (the revolutionary mass newspaper in Northern Mindanao), the raid was conducted by an NPA platoon at around 8 a.m. of October 16. Aside from the casualties reported on the government side, one CAFGU element surrendered and two others escaped. Confiscated from the raid were eight Garands with 462 rounds of ammunition and 46 clips; four M14 rifles with 148 rounds of ammunition and 10 magazines; one M203 with nine rounds of ammunition; six M16 rifles with 210 rounds of ammunition and 17 magazines; one carbine loaded with 10 rounds of ammunition and one magazine; five 81-mm mortars; 18 pairs of combat shoes, nine combat vests; seven packs; and other military equipment and documents.

September 17, around midnight. An NPA squad and a team of people's militia assaulted a PNP City Mobile Group (CMG) detachment in Purok 6, Bit-os, Butuan City. One policeman was wounded while his companions scampered towards the Agusan River. Confiscated from the 10-minute raid were two 9 mm pistols and with six fully loaded magazines; one M14 ammunition belt; and two VHF handheld radios. The detachment was attacked to punish the CMG for malversation and extorting fees from poor vendors of firewood and other commodities. According to *Ang Kalihukan*, the people, especially the CMG's victims, lauded the raid. The attack was also a deep blow against the enemy because the detachment was very near the center of Butuan City.

September 12. An NPA squad ambushed a seven-man Philippine Army and CAFGU squad patrolling the riverbank along Purok Balatacan, Sityo Calamboyan, Ginabsan, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. A soldier and CAFGU member were killed while their other companions scampered away. Because of the ambush, the military relieved their cadreman in charge of the CAFGU as punishment and confined him to the barracks of the 401st Brigade of the Philippine Army.

August 10. A squad from the Jabbar "Salipudan" Hocad Mandahinong Command (an NPA unit composed of *lumad* fighters) punished Datu Mandedli in Kanagaan, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon. Datu Mandedli, an informer and member of the Tribal Council organized by the reactionary government, was one of the brains behind the heinous murder of two Red fighters, husband and wife Venancio Cogollodo (Ka Sanag) and Felisa Baylosis (Ka Joy). The two were decapitated and their bodies burned on February 8 in Catalawan, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon.